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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 000580

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [ENRG](#) [EAID](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [EUN](#)
SUBJECT: EU: PM MALIKI MEETS WITH EU LEADERS

REF: A. BRUSSELS 550

[1](#)B. BRUSSELS 108

Classified By: Alyce Tidball, Deputy Political Minister Counselor for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki and his delegation met with European Union leaders in Brussels on Wednesday, April 16. Both European Commission President Barroso and Council HiRep Solana, in separate meetings, highlighted the need for: Iraqi national reconciliation, provincial elections in October, the hydrocarbon law, and a solution to the situation in Kirkuk. Barroso, in a joint press conference with Maliki, confirmed EU commitment to helping Iraq and declared the EU is close to reaching an energy security pact with Iraq. Maliki addressed the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee describing progress in Iraq and asking for continued EU assistance in capacity building and training. He also called on EU companies to increase investments in Iraq. The Iraqis canceled their meeting with Slovenian Presidency FM Rupel. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) BARROSO MEETING

According to Commission contact, the meeting with Barroso was "not a dynamic meeting", but confirmed the interest of both the Iraqis and the EU to cooperate more closely and to build longer term relations. Barroso stressed the need for: national reconciliation in Iraq, local elections this year, passage of the hydrocarbon law, and a suitable and sustainable solution to the situation in Kirkuk. PM Maliki described the security situation, noting that the operations in Basrah show that the Iraqis are doing their best to secure Iraq, to clear out the "criminal gangs", and to draw Sunnis into the government again. Barroso outlined EC desire to focus its assistance efforts on capacity building. Barroso also discussed the EU's desire to move ahead on energy security and cooperation. (Iraq Oil Minister al-Shahristani's meeting with EU Energy Commissioner Pielbags will be reported septel.) At a joint press conference following the meeting, Barroso declared that the EU wants to establish an energy security partnership with Iraq and said they would sign an MOU in the coming weeks. Barroso also said that negotiations on a trade and cooperation agreement were progressing very well. PM Maliki asked for more aid from the Europeans for reconstruction efforts and Barroso declared Iraq could count on EU solidarity to build a peaceful country based on democracy and rule of law.

[1](#)3. (C) SOLANA MEETING

Council contact described the meeting with HiRep Solana as very useful. Contact was personally struck with PM Maliki's confidence as he underlined progress in Iraq, an observation confirmed by a member state contact who had also received a readout of the meeting. He reported that inter-sectarian

violence had stopped and Iraq is no longer on the brink of civil war. Sunnis, he said, are ready to re-enter the political system and the government. He insisted that current violence is caused by criminal gangs hiding behind political slogans and declared that the population of Iraq supports him. Solana delivered messages on the need for political reconciliation, local elections, hydrocarbon law, and a solution to Kirkuk. Both Solana and Maliki agreed to strengthen relations on all fronts. Another council contact reported that FM Zebari was the most impressive interlocutor in the meeting and the only one willing to state that Iran is a problem.

14. (U) EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

PM Maliki met with European Parliament President Poettering and then addressed the EP's Foreign Affairs Committee and the Delegation for Relations with Iraq. He stressed the improvement in the security situation as evidenced by the Basrah operation. He highlighted the upcoming October provincial elections as a new step toward a stable and democratic Iraq. Answering questions, Maliki said the GOI would "ensure that militias will not interfere," noting that the law banning political parties with militias from participating in elections had been welcomed by all parties. He confirmed that internally displaced people and refugees would be able to vote, but stressed that the technicalities to allow this to happen have yet to be addressed. Asked about the withdrawal of coalition forces, he stressed that sudden withdrawal "would lead to confusion" but advocated an "organized withdrawal." Asked by a British MEP if UK forces were still needed in the south, he replied that "those provinces are now under the control of Iraqi forces." On relations with neighbors, Maliki stressed that Iraq should "not be a playground for a regional power game," adding that he had told neighboring countries that "we want them to stop

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their territory from being a training place for terrorists." Finally, he called on EU companies to increase their investments in Iraq, stressing the need for European technologies and capital. He also called for continued EU help in capacity building and training.

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